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TAGS: [PARM](#) [KACT](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [US](#)  
SUBJECT: SFO-GVA-VIII: (U) Meeting of the Expanded Ad-Hoc Group,  
February 23, 2010

CLASSIFIED BY: Rose E. Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary, Department  
of State, VCI; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

[1](#)1. (U) This is SFO-GVA-VIII-074.

[1](#)2. (U) Meeting Date: February 23, 2010

Time: 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Place: Russian Mission, Geneva

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SUMMARY

[1](#)3. (S) During the Expanded Ad-Hoc Group meeting held at the Russian Mission on February 11, the two sides discussed three main subjects: 1) the removal of converted heavy bombers from accountability; 2) the conversion of SLBM launchers on an SSBN; and 3) the Russian proposal for counting non-nuclear objects on the front sections of ICBMs and SLBMs. Both sides identified the subjects of inspections at Vandenberg AFB, CA, regarding the five former ICBM silos now used to hold missile defense interceptors and the issue of accounting for non-deployed heavy bombers within the START Follow-on Treaty (SFO) as additional items for future discussion.

[1](#)4. (S) The sides were unable to reach resolution on either the application of counting rules for converted heavy bombers, or whether the agreed portions of the treaty allowed for the conversion of individual SLBM launchers on an SSBN. The sides continued discussion on the Russian proposal for not counting objects declared to be non-nuclear on front sections which also contained nuclear-armed re-entry vehicles (RVs). The sides agreed to continue discussing the proposal as the U.S. delegation awaited guidance. End summary.

[1](#)5. (S) SUBJECT SUMMARY: Does This Bomber Count?; We Must Have 14 SSBNs; and Counting Objects on Front Sections.

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DOES THIS BOMBER COUNT?  
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16. (S) Col Ilin opened the meeting by reminding everyone that today was a Russian holiday, the most important day in a 4-day weekend dedicated to the Russian armed forces. Dr. Warner congratulated him on the holiday and noted that during our SFO negotiations we seemed to work on each other's holidays. Ilin outlined the proposed agenda for the day, beginning with counting rules for converted heavy bombers. This discussion was a resumption of the discussion which began the day prior at the Agreed Statements meeting, with the Russian side arguing that the U.S. concept of removing heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments from accountability, as each one was converted to a heavy bomber equipped for non-nuclear armaments, was inconsistent with subparagraph 6(c) of Article III of the Treaty, concerning when the last heavy bomber of a type was converted or eliminated. The Russian side contended that no converted bombers of a specific type cease to be counted as equipped for nuclear armaments until all bombers of that specific type have been converted. That is, all the converted bombers would cease to exist in the accounting of deployed delivery systems simultaneously, at a point in time coinciding with the conversion of the final heavy bomber of the

type. Ilin asked Warner to continue the explanation begun the day prior on how the United States perceived that converted heavy bombers ceased to count against the treaty central limit for deployed delivery systems under the current agreed text in the treaty and protocols, particularly subparagraph 6(c) of Article III of the treaty.

17. (S) Warner explained that conversions would be carried out in a sequential manner, vice simultaneously, and each heavy bomber should cease to be counted in that same sequential manner as would be applied in the case of the central limit on deployed delivery systems. Warner acknowledged that the specific type of bomber would continue to be listed as an existing type until the last bomber of that type was converted or eliminated, but argued that the process of conversion was a rolling, incremental process; consequently the process of counting items undergoing conversion or elimination against treaty central limits should be incremental. Warner further stated that if each converted bomber ceased to count against the launcher limit the moment it was converted, the reality of how many deployed delivery systems existed under the treaty would be better reflected. Both sides did, however, agree that after the last B-1B was converted to only non-nuclear delivery capability, the B-1B would cease to exist as a type and would be removed from the database.

18. (S) Warner also countered that even if the sides disagreed on the meaning or indefinite articles used in subparagraph 6(c) of Article III, the provisions for removing converted B-1Bs from accountability immediately upon conversion were also supported by other parts of Article III, Part Three to the Protocol and the First Agreed Statement. While the formulations in these three references may not be identical, he stated, all three supported the U.S. case.

19. (S) Mr. Elliott drew the Russians' attention to Paragraph 5 of Article III, which he argued was a counterweight to the Russian argument that subparagraph 6(c) was authoritative on the issue of how to count. Elliott further reminded the Russian delegation that the agreed statement was specifically designed to handle the issue

of B-1B conversions, and was therefore the most authoritative since it was intended to summarize all aspects of B-1B conversions in a detailed manner, notwithstanding subparagraph 6(c) of Article III.

¶10. (S) Ilin summarized the state of play on B-1B conversions as he saw it: the United States decided to convert the B-1B; the United States had been dissatisfied with the 500-600 central limit on deployed delivery systems, so Russia conceded to the United States to increase the limit to 700 deployed strategic delivery systems; now the United States was dissatisfied with the 700 limit; and now the United States wanted counting to cease during a process that would certainly be done very soon and even though the UNITED STATES would not come up against the 7-year timetable to achieve the treaty central limits. Warner gave quite a different perspective: the United States had already made deep cuts from a desired limit of 1100 deployed delivery systems, yet would still achieve 700 by the end of the treaty's 7-year draw-down period. Moreover, the discussion should not be focusing on the B-1B, because the provisions would mainly be applied to the B-52H. The United States would finish conversion of all B-1Bs by the end of 2010, and it would cease to exist as a type and would not count toward the treaty's central limits. In the case of the B-52H, however, the United States intended to convert some of these bombers, and intended those converted models to cease counting under the delivery vehicle limit step- by-step as each B-52H was converted. Warner said the United States was mindful of the B-52H all along, and was correspondingly careful with treaty language;

"we believed" each item would be removed from accountability as a heavy bomber equipped with nuclear armaments as each bomber was converted. Warner concluded by noting that both sides agreed that a class of systems will cease to exist once the last system is converted or eliminated, but disagreed about "how to keep score" as the conversion or elimination process was underway.

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WE MUST HAVE 14 SSBNs  
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¶11. (S) Ilin shifted to the issue of conversion of individual SLBM launchers on SSBNs. He freely admitted that when Russia agreed to add a third central limit of 800 for total deployed and non-deployed launchers, Russia did not expect that the United States would undertake the conversion of anything less than an entire SSBN as it was converted into an SSGN. He said this invalid assumption led to the agreed statement having the language it did. Ilin read the U.S. responses to the questions that the Russian side had posed to the U.S. side several days earlier. (Begin comment: The responses had previously been provided to the Russian delegation in writing. End comment.) Ilin scanned the U.S. responses and made several points, the first being that there was no evidence in the U.S. response that the conversion process would be irreversible once an SLBM launcher had been converted. He noted there was no way to distinguish an SSBN with a few converted SLBM launchers from an SSGN by external distinguishing features. Furthermore, he argued there were no external distinguishing features which would indicate which converted launchers were carrying ballast cans. Finally, he argued that the current agreed text did not provide for a good process for removing individual launchers from accountability.

¶12. (S) Gen Orlov noted the use of the phrase "if the United States elects to convert individual SLBM launchers" in several of the U.S. responses indicated that the United States was not yet certain that it would undertake this conversion process. Orlov said the United States needed to think further about whether to

undertake the process at all, and that it should consider that it would be difficult to prove that a launcher could not actually launch an SLBM after conversion had occurred. He suggested that it would be simpler to convert another entire SSBN to an SSGN, a decision that would benefit both sides' concerns.

¶13. (S) Warner explained that the United States had determined that it should retain 14 SSBNs and convert individual launchers on each as an effective means necessary to meet treaty limits. Warner recounted that the United States determined that it could get 40 years of service life out of an SSBN, but that each would have to undergo extended refueling overhaul in order for that to occur. While the United States had many more submarines during the Cold War, it was down to 18 at the initiation of the extended overhaul program, which began over a decade ago. The U.S. Navy leadership decided it was cost-effective and efficient to retain 18 Ohio-class submarines, four of which were converted to SSGNs. Warner underscored that while the treaty would cause the United States to cut the number of launchers, the U.S. Navy still wanted to retain 14 SSBNs to maximize availability for operations. Knowing this, the U.S. delegation had negotiated this treaty, in particular, paragraph 4 to Part Three of the Protocol (on conversion and elimination), which allowed conversion of individual launchers.

¶14. (S) ADM Kuznetsov expressed fear that the process was not

irreversible, as Russia routinely placed ballast cans in launchers which were fully operational. He remarked that it was ironic that while President Obama was striving for "global zero," the U.S. Navy would continue to eliminate five or six launchers on each SSBN. Finally, when "global zero" was achieved, the Navy would have to explain to President Obama why he had no SLBM launchers, but still had 14 SSBNs afloat.

¶15. (S) Warner closed this issue by reminding the Russian side that the United States would live up to its obligations under Part Three of the Protocol, and that Kuznetsov was improperly focused on the "ballast can" that would likely be carried in a disabled SLBM launcher instead of focusing on the conversion process which would take place and be confirmed by Russian inspectors, and would make the selected launch tubes incapable of launching SLBMs. The "ballast can" was merely a step, Warner said, that would have to be taken to maintain the center of gravity of the SSBN at sea, but was a separate issue from the actual conversion measures. Warner stated unequivocally that the United States intended to allow Russian inspectors aboard the SSBN in order to confirm the launchers had been converted. Finally, Warner pointed out that the United States could place ballast cans into a fully capable SLBM launcher and such launchers would still count as non-deployed under the non-deployed launcher concept within SFO since a launcher that does not contain a missile is considered non-deployed and does not count against the 700 strategic delivery vehicle or 1550 warhead limits.

¶16. (S) Elliott reviewed portions of the written responses he provided in answer to Ilin's list of questions on the conversion of individual launchers.

Begin text of U.S. response:

SFO-VIII

Paper of the U.S. Side

February 22, 2010

## Response to Russian Delegation Questions

On

### U.S. Plans to Convert Certain Launchers of Trident II SLBMs

The following responses to questions of the Russian Delegation are provided to provide clarity for further discussions:

Q1: The purpose of conversion of individual launchers of Trident II SLBM launchers.

A1: In order to comply with the central limits of 700 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers and 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers, the United States will be required to convert or eliminate approximately 80 deployed ICBM or SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers. Should the United States elect to convert a limited number of SLBM launchers on its existing Trident II SSBNs, the tubes will most likely be configured to carry ballast or be used for storage of miscellaneous equipment.

Q2: Total number of launchers scheduled for conversion.

A2: There are no plans to convert SLBM launchers. However, should the United States elect to convert SLBM launchers, the number of converted launchers could range from 2 to 4 SLBM launchers on each of 14 Trident II SSBNs.

Q3: Time frame for conversion activities (beginning and end of the activities).

A3: Given the United States has made no decision to convert SLBM launchers, no reasonable estimate of the length of time required to convert these launchers is possible. Several factors will influence the duration of the conversion process, including the intended use of such a launcher, the method of conversion, and other major overhaul or refit activities planned for the Trident II SSBNs.

Q4: Technological conversion characteristics, differences between the conducted conversion of SSBNs into SSGNs and the forthcoming conversions.

A4: Conversion of SLBM launchers would be accomplished in accordance with Section I, paragraphs 3-6 and Section IV, paragraphs 6 and 7 of Part Three of the Protocol. The principal criterion shall be that the launcher is no longer capable of employing an SLBM. Since the United States Government has not made a decision to convert SLBM launchers, neither has the potential use for such a converted launcher nor the method of conversion has been determined. For this reason, no effective comparison to the past conversion of the Trident I SSBNs can be made, other than to confirm that the procedures selected would be consistent with the criteria established in Part Three of the Protocol.

Q5: Functional differences and observable distinguishing features of converted or non-converted launchers.

A5: Functionally, any converted SLBM launcher will no longer be capable of employing an SLBM. Because no decision has been made to convert SLBM launchers, no new function can be expressed with certainty at this time. However, the most likely function would be to carry ballast containers. Observation of the functional differences and observable distinguishing features of the first

item of a type converted would be made during an exhibition as specified in Section 1, paragraph 5 of Part Three of the Protocol.

Q6: Bases for SSBNs with converted launchers, broadening of the functions of SSBNs.

A6: SSBNs with converted launchers formerly capable of employing SLBMs will be based at the existing submarine bases located at Silverdale, Washington and Kings Bay, Georgia. The U.S. side notes that this question suggests the functions of SSBNs will be broadened. The U.S. has no plans to broaden the function of its SSBNs.

Q7: Counting procedures for converted launchers with the framework of the Treaty:

A7: When an SLBM launcher is converted by rendering it incapable of employing an SLBM in a manner that the other Party can confirm the results of the conversion, such a converted strategic offensive arm shall cease to be subject to the aggregate numbers provided for

in Article II of the Treaty and may be used for purposes not inconsistent with the Treaty (see Section I, paragraph 3 of Part Three of the Protocol).

Q8: Conversion verification measures.

A8: The results of conversion of strategic offensive arms subject to the Treaty may be confirmed by inspection in accordance with Articles ((XI))1((X))2 and ((XII))1((XI))2 of the Treaty (see Section I, paragraph 6 of Part Three of the Protocol).

Q9: Inspection regime with regard to converted launchers after the completion of the conversion process.

A9: The results of conversion of strategic offensive arms subject to the Treaty may be confirmed in accordance with Articles ((XI))1((X))2 and ((XII))1((XI))2 of the Treaty (see Section I, paragraph 6 of Part Three of the Protocol).

End text.

¶17. (S) Elliott assured the Russian side that he did his best to answer the questions honestly and in detail. He then made several supporting remarks, beginning with the concept that conversion of an individual SLBM launcher to a launcher for a sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM) was somewhat impractical, as a commander would not want to get within SLCM range of the shore while carrying SLBMs. He also responded to some other Russian assertions, stating that it was also a mismatch to place a SEAL delivery vehicle atop converted launchers on an SSBN for the same proximity-to-shore reason. Again, Elliott reminded the Russian delegation that Russian inspectors would be able to confirm the conversion of the launchers and that they should know that removal of the gas generator would make the launch of an SLBM impossible.

¶18. (S) Ilin took one final shot, contending that the treaty did not provide for the conversion of individual launchers, to which Warner replied that the treaty did not preclude such conversions. In fact, Warner suggested that there was another option, conversions or eliminations could be treated as exhibitions rather than Type-2 inspections. Ilin balked at that suggestion.

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COUNTING OBJECTS ON FRONT SECTIONS  
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¶19. (S) The meeting concluded with continued discussion of the Russian proposal of February 18, to not count "other, non-nuclear objects" located on the front section of an ICBM or SLBM which included at least one nuclear RV. Ilin explained that these other, non-nuclear objects could be distinguished from the nuclear-armed RVs using START-type procedures. He asked for Warner's thoughts on the Russian proposal.

¶20. (S) Warner suggested some language in English that would clarify the Russian proposal. The first statement indicated that both sides agreed there was no military utility in placing a

conventionally-armed warhead alongside a nuclear-armed warhead on the same front section of an ICBM or SLBM. Conversely, he said, objects that are not RVs with a nuclear warhead on a front section which contained a nuclear warhead would not be counted against the limit of 1550 warheads. Ilin agreed, stating that there was no military utility in mixing nuclear and conventional warheads on the same front section, so long as there was one nuclear warhead, all other non-nuclear objects should not be counted against the 1550 warhead limit.

¶21. (S) Warner further agreed that it should be the right of the inspecting Party to confirm that objects declared to be non-nuclear were not, in fact, RVs with nuclear warheads. When Ilin agreed, Warner responded that this entire concept sounded like a potential agreed statement, although he cautioned Ilin not to consider this idea as a formal proposal at this time. Staffing would have to occur in both capitals, according to Warner, and the appropriate nuanced language would have to be formulated. Poznikhir concurred and echoed Warner's thoughts.

¶22. (U) Documents provided:

- United States:

-- U.S. Written Response to Russia's Questions on Trident II Conversion and Elimination Procedures, dated February 22, 2010.

¶23. (U) Participants:

UNITED STATES

Amb Ries

Mr. Dean

Mr. Elliott

LTC Litterini (RO)

Mr. McConnell

Mr. Siemon  
Mr. Taylor  
Mr. Trout  
Dr. Warner  
Ms. Zdravecky  
Ms. Gross (Int)

RUSSIA

Col Ilin  
Mr. Koshelev  
  
Adm Kuznetsov  
Mr. Orlov  
Mr. Poznikhir  
Col Ryzhkov  
Col Zaitsev  
Ms. Evarovskaya (Int)

¶24. (U) Gottemoeller sends.  
KING